

THE REFORMER.

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[VOL. I.]

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth. . . . Jeremiah, v. 1.

WE noticed in our last a communication signed Z. To this we shall now endeavour to reply with the same candour with which he has written to us. And,

First, With regard to being "guarded in our attacks, lest in pulling up the tares, we destroy the wheat also"—we observe, We would be very sorry to injure the smallest plant of true righteousness; but we must state, that this expression may be so extended in its application, as to require us to let the greatest evils pass without attempting their removal, lest something right should be removed with them, and what is wrong could never be remedied. We are not to lose sight of another saying of Christ, that *every plant which his heavenly Father had not planted, should be rooted up.*

Z. Proceeds: "If there be any good in a society, whether it be Bible, Missionary or Sunday School, or any other institution designed to spread religious knowledge, and religious influence; or in any denomination of professing christians; it should always be acknowledged when we undertake to expose their errors, lest a barrier of prejudice be raised, which would preclude access to the reason and consciences of those you design to benefit by your publication."

It appears unnecessary to acknowledge the good in the societies here mentioned. Persons engaged in them, see this with sufficient readiness. Indeed, these institutions seem quite overrated. They are greatly extolled and praised by almost every one; and more we believe is expected from them, than in the end will ever be realized.—We shall find, moreover, that

all the ancient Prophets, and Christ himself, were principally concerned to point out evils; in doing which, a barrier of prejudice was always raised against them, and fault was found with their testimony.

It more properly belongs to all who would do good and be useful, to point out what is wrong, in order for its amendment, than to set forth the good there may be. Let wrongs be rectified, and then only what is right will be left remaining. It should also be recollected, that nothing strictly right has been opposed in this publication. It is the spirit by which persons are actuated in these institutions—the manner in which they are conducted—and the merit that is supposed to be attached to engaging in them, that have been chiefly embraced in our remarks.—We may add, perhaps there never was a society in existence, but there was some good in it: and it is well known, that all societies profess to be right, and avow a design to promote good; yet some of the most specious of them, have not resulted in much benefit to mankind. Witness the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, (more commonly called,) their extensive influence, and the effects of all their exertions. It cannot be denied but they did some good. The celebrated *Francis Xavier* was among the first who engaged in this institution; and his labours in the East Indies and in Japan, were attended with the greatest success, and many through his instrumentality appear to have been turned to the Lord. But all things considered, it had been better had such a society never existed. And we hesitate not to state it as our belief, that no very considerable benefit will arise to mankind, from any of the numerous associations and institutions now going forward in Christendom; while they excite an opinion in many, that religion is in a very flourishing condition, and induce them to rest too much in these undertakings; by which means they are prevented from seeking after that holiness and purity, indispensably necessary to be obtained, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. The many offices, moreover in these societies, serve to beget pride and self-consequence in those appointed to them, whereby they

sustain the most serious injury as disciples of Christ. Besides, too many who are mere men of the world, are engaged in them and active in their support, to admit of a supposition that they are working the *work of God*, or promoting pure and undefiled religion.

We are well aware we are taking a very unpopular stand, and that nearly all will be against us. But candour and integrity require us to express the true sentiments of our minds; and after ages must be left to decide with regard to the correctness or incorrectness of these views. We would likewise here state, that we believe it most proper for those who would wish to become, or to continue right, to have neither part nor lot in these associations; as a particular influence prevails among them, prejudicial to the progress and the existence of true religion in the heart.

A passage in the book of Daniel sufficiently satisfies us, that none of these splendid associations and combinations of men, embracing great and distinguished characters, such as Right Honorables, Divines, and D. D.'s will be made the means of accomplishing that reformation foretold in prophecy. The passage alluded to expressly declares, that the stone which breaks in pieces and consumes the kingdoms of this world, and fills the whole earth, is *cut out without hands*; implying, that no splendid and popular undertakings or associations of men, will have any part in effecting this important work. The word of the Lord to the prophet Isaiah, chapter viii., may, we conceive, with great propriety, be applied to these undertakings.—“Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand.—For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and

let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary ; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel ; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken."

These associations or confederacies, now so numerous in christendom, are for the most part undertaken by corrupt bodies of men, in whom the true spirit and simplicity of the gospel are nearly departed ; and how can it be expected *they* will bring about a right state of things ? True reformation and righteousness will, we have no doubt, come through another channel, or be accomplished by other means, which the Lord himself shall appoint. And, indeed, while all these institutions are going forward, it is but too evident that the world is rapidly increasing in wickedness, and becoming still more corrupt. And, furthermore, if by these associations men were to accomplish what they seem to expect, they would share in the glory of what is effected, and take praise to themselves ; whereas God has always accomplished his work by such weak means or instruments, that no flesh could *glory in his presence* ; for he has said, *My glory will I not give to another.*

With respect to "a rashness of attack" complained of, and the observation that the pens of *some* of our correspondents seem to have been touched with gall ; we would remark, that soft words and smooth sayings will have but little effect towards correcting many of the obstinate and long-standing evils which prevail in this day. We shall here make a quotation from Luther in justification of our correspondents. Speaking of one who thought, perhaps, that a few mild reproofs or gentle admonitions would answer every purpose for correcting the abuses of his time, he says ; " In all his writings his grand object is, to avoid the cross, give no offence, and live at peace. Hence he thinks it proper, on all subjects, to display a sort of civility, good nature, and good breeding ; but I say, *Behemoth* [meaning Popery] will pay no regard to such treatment, nor ever be amended by it. Popery will never be reformed one tittle by

writings that give no offence, that make no attack, in a word that do not bite."

The testimony of Christ himself against the pharisees and professors of his time, might by some be charged with undue severity; and it was considered, no doubt, as rash and unwarrantable, by those against whom it was delivered. What could be more severe, or more pointed than these words: "Wo unto you scribes, pharisees, hypocrites," "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell." Observe here, our Saviour made no exceptions in these declarations. He did not call only some of the scribes and pharisees hypocrites, serpents, and vipers; his words seemed to include them all; and yet we may reasonably suppose, that among them some were as good, according to the dispensation they lived under, as the teachers and professors of religion are in this day, considering the light of the present dispensation.

This brings us to the last charge preferred against us or our correspondents, viz. the indiscriminate crimination that has been delivered in this work, against the various associations and institutions now going forward in christendom, and those engaged in them. This is not a solitary charge; it has been made by numbers;—and we here reply, once for all, that it is wholly improper to make the exceptions and qualifications which many appear so much to desire, when evils are pointed out in order for their amendment. In such cases, we have nothing to do with the good that exists; it is what is wrong and improper we are to witness against. There is not an example in all the scriptures of any of the prophets, when they undertook to rebuke the evils in their time, speaking of the good there was in the land, and excepting some of the priests and people, as persons to whom their reproofs did not apply. God in his wisdom did not authorize them to do this. A testimony against evils would lose all its force, and produce no effect, if qualified by exceptions and reservations. In proof of what has been stated, hear the words of the prophet Jeremiah. "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from

them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.”—“Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.”—“For every one, from the least even unto the greatest, is given to covetousness; from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely.”—Can any charges be made more general, or more inclusive than these? and the declarations of Christ before referred to, are of a like nature. Yet we are not to suppose there were none among them that were exceptions to what they are here charged with. Those to whom these censures did not apply, made no complaint—found no fault; for they did not affect them. And when people object and find fault with a procedure so authorized by examples in scripture, it is almost demonstrative proof, that they are not on the right side of the question, and wish to weaken the force of a true testimony, because it is likely to operate against themselves. We wish not, however, to apply this to the person to whom we now reply, as we consider his address to us to be written with much candour. And we here observe, it was never our design to be understood, that none engaged in the institutions of the present day, were actuated with a motive to the glory of God; or that none contributed to them, without letting the left hand know what the right hand doeth. Though we must confess, we make these concessions with reluctance, because we consider them unnecessary and unprofitable; and they are only made, in order that such objections hereafter may cease.

In conclusion we would remark, whatever views some may entertain respecting this publication, and the testimony contained in it, our object has been pure; and no pecuniary consideration, nor a wish to find fault has at any time influenced us. We do not state this as a mere common-place saying, which we have reason to believe is too often made without true integrity of heart; but

we make it as those that must give an account to God. We could wish that people were sensible of the evils which abound in this day, and the little true religion that exists ; for we see this to be of the first importance, as people will never seek to become better, while they are under a supposition they are already right. We are sorry, indeed, that it can be said with too much truth, that there is hardly a plain and faithful testimony now in the world ; almost all being wedded to some small peculiarities, which it is their chief concern to support or keep up a veneration for ; or are seeking the favour of men. And hence, sin and wickedness greatly prevail, and are still increasing on the earth.

For The Reformer.

The office of a preacher is certainly a very important one ; and whether it be assumed with, or without, the proper authority, the man who stands in that station, if he possess a moderate share of fluency and pathos of expression, will obtain considerable place in the affections of many of his hearers, while his conduct in any tolerable degree comports with his pretensions. Their capacity to form a correct judgment of his labours, must vary with their different degrees of penetration : but their favourable opinion is not always a proof of the soundness of his doctrine, or of the sacredness of his authority. Such are the weakness and credulity of too many, that they receive for truth almost any sentiment their teacher may advance, and upon no other evidence than his bare testimony. They consider him an infallible oracle. His precepts are not to be controverted, and his example may be safely pursued, merely because they think he is God's vicegerent. That whether the person who occupies that station be really a minister of Christ's gospel, or whether he teaches for doctrine the speculations of men, still his influence may be such,

that the detection of his departure from the principles of justice and common honesty, or the commission of any other scandalous and immoral conduct, would inflict a wound in many an innocent, sincere heart, and reproach the religion which he had attempted to inculcate. It would not repair the injury, to say that he did not merit their confidence, and it was therefore immaterial how soon he discovered himself. For the practicability of the deception under which they had rested, furnishes an argument against the reality of religion, and thus goes to secure the libertine in the more easy indulgence of his vicious inclinations.

If such are the prejudicial effects in the case of a professionalist, what must be the consequences of the defection of the true ministers, God's ambassador's to the people, by whom he has besought them to be reconciled to himself? Whose hearts have been expanded by the universal love of the gospel, and who have, under its holy influence and authority, promulgated those eternal immutable truths, in which they most surely believed. Dreadful is the individual situation of such—awful must be their feelings when awakened from the fatal delusions into which they have plunged. To whom can be more applicable the assertion of the eminent apostle Paul—"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." The number of such apostacies in the christian world, have not been a few. And though the faithful adherents to the cross may secretly say, "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the uncircumcised triumph," yet the publickness of the station precludes the possibility of concealing the knowledge of these lamentable failures, and of arresting their baleful consequences to the general cause of religion.

Much has been written to produce a reform in the mi-

nistry. But is it not desirable, while the priestcraft of the day is exposed, that the inexperienced, yet sincere lovers of truth, may not be turned aside by their defections, and induced to suppose that religion is a mere scheme for personal aggrandisement; or that the conscientious scruples which they feel, are the offspring of a distempered imagination. Religion is the work of God in the soul of man. It is a real heartfelt acquaintance and co-operation with him in its redemption and sanctification. It is the restoration of that life which Adam lost thro' disobedience. Hence it consists independent on creeds, and altogether distinct from the subtle interpretations of texts, or all the learned disquisitions of doctrines in the world. Nevertheless, the principles of the Christian religion are certain truths, savingly known and understood, through the illuminations of divine light; and they will forever remain to be true, whether all men forsake them or not. Therefore, though a thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; though dark may be the hypocrisy and degeneracy of many high professors, yet the foundation stands unchanged. The light of truth, which has shed its renovating rays on your understanding, will continue, if not hindered, to discover your imperfections, and by its invigorating energy, strengthen you to surmount every obstacle that impedes the coming of the perfect day. Be not, therefore, appalled at the sound of defection, though standard bearers may faint, but "sanctify the Lord God of Hosts, and let *Him* be your fear, and let *Him* be your dread."

A. M.

For The Reformer.

That religion which is produced by the operation of the Spirit of God in the soul of man, is the only true religion which brings man into perfect order, and to a consistency of character. Without this, all external rituals, however well devised by the rational understanding, are imperfect, and fall short of that harmony which per-

vades the whole system of God's works. The things of man, or those which relate to his temporal concerns, are known by the natural understanding; but the things of God no man knoweth *of himself*. The Spirit of God operating upon the soul, reveals them to him. That religion, then, which a man obtains by natural means, or by the same process of mind, which leads him to follow the fashions of the times, is a religion which falls far short of the true and soul saving knowledge of God and of his Son Jesus Christ. Hence, all those who trust in their own works, which are wrought in the natural froward will of the creature, have great reason to distrust the sufficiency of a religion, whose source and fountain being unsanctified by the Spirit of God, can never produce soul satisfying peace, however glorious such a religion may appear in deeds of splendour and works performed "to be seen of men." It was justly observed by a wise man, that "the overcoming of one wayward passion, is a more acceptable service to God, than all the penance that ever was performed in the will of man." But how different from this have been the maxims which have governed mankind, under the benighted influence of ignorance and superstition. They have been taught to look to the lips of the priests for knowledge, for absolution and pardon. And in the dark days of "Papal Rome," a cardinal, who added vast sums to his wealth by extortion and covetousness, by fraud and violence, at last vainly endeavoured to atone for his sins, by leaving his ill gotten wealth to the church. This happened a great many years ago. Does nothing happen now that may stand upon a parallel with it? Yes! Men appear to think they may accumulate all the property they can reach; may covet the hard earnings of others; may fare sumptuously and riotously every day, and atone to heaven by professing the name of Christ; and promoting, by contributions, the various *fashionable* religious projects of the time. But like the builders of Babel, who intended to make themselves a name as well as a place of security, confusion must eventually encircle them all.

LUCAS.

The following extracts are taken from the Address of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, *to the Churches and Congregations under their care*, in behalf of the *Theological Seminary at Princeton*.

“BELOVED BRETHREN,

“We are called to address you on a matter of immediate and vital concern to us all. The Assembly trust that among the friends of the Presbyterian Church, there prevails but one sentiment respecting the importance and necessity of ministerial education, and but one feeling, a feeling of deep and anxious regard, for those schools of sacred learning which the goodness of God has raised up in the midst of us. To argue, at this period of the world, and under the existing degree of religious light in this country, the question respecting the utility of such seminaries would be worse than idle. You have not only seen the truth on this subject, but have felt it, and not only felt, but acted. You have erected, and to some extent endowed a THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL of the highest character. Many amiable youth have already received, either in whole or in part, their ministerial preparation within its walls. The destitute churches from every part of our country have looked toward it with anxious expectation, nor have they looked in vain: of those youth a large number have already gone forth, and are at this hour surrounded with flocks rejoicing in their gifts, and rapidly growing under their labours. For those who are still under instruction, other flocks are waiting: while other youth are rising up to succeed to their place in the Seminary, and in their turn to go forth to gladden yet other flocks of our God. Brethren, this is a fair and beautiful sight; and none can contemplate it with indifference who love America, and believe that God's presence and favour are her most effectual shield. But this sight is not likely to be long enjoyed. The active funds of the institution are more than exhausted—they are upward of a thousand dollars in arrears. The Directors have had to borrow money to pay the current salary of the Professors. Such a state of things cannot, of course, con-

tinue: and after all our fair prospects and fond anticipations, the Assembly will have to give up this child of their hopes and of their prayers, to die for want. From such a sight they turn as Hagar did. But there is no remedy: die it must, and that speedily, unless some immediate and effectual hand interpose to save it. It seems hard, indeed, that a Church containing a hundred thousand members in full communion, and embodying a mass of intelligence, influence and wealth, such as is not easily paralleled, should stand by, and suffer to perish before its eyes, an institution that contains the vital interests of its perpetuity and strength. Yet such appears to be the fact. Individual munificence has, indeed, been displayed, and has erected to itself lasting monuments in the hearts of those who watch and pray over the prospects of this Seminary; but a great and permanent establishment, of common interest and of common utility, is not to look to individual munificence, but to public contribution, for its support. When that school was founded, it was asked, Where are your funds? And it was confidently answered, 'In the hearts of our people.' Should the question be now repeated by those who learn the state of its treasury, what could the Assembly answer?

"Brethren, we look around with anxious emotion. Our country is in a course of population such as the world never witnessed till this hour. Extensive tracts but yesterday without an inhabitant, to day are teeming with multitudes, and filled with rising villages and towns. Where a ministry can be supplied to them, these settlements form churches with no less rapidity than they multiply civil establishments. Entire Synods have thus been created to our Church within a few years. But if the sources from whence that ministry proceed should dry up, what must be the consequence, we do not say, to immortal souls, nor even to the cause of Christ's truth, but to the morals of human society, and to the continuance of our civil liberty? With all the seminaries of all the churches in full and vigorous operation, this march of population far outstrips the efforts at supply. Is it then a time to shut up such a

Seminary that has been instructing during the past year not less than seventy of our future ministry? Other denominations are founding schools and endowing them—shall the Presbyterian Church choose such an hour to abandon theirs? It will be asked, has not Princeton Seminary a permanent fund? It has; but the proceeds of that fund do not meet one fourth of its current expenses. The churches therefore have this alternative now presented to them—either to say to the Board, dismiss your students, discharge your professors, and shut your Seminary doors—or to furnish the means of continuing the school. Can any friend to Jesus Christ, any lover of the doctrines of grace, any well wisher to the cause of religion and morals in our country, pause long on such an alternative?

“The Assembly in urging these considerations turn especially to those who are already in the ministry. You, brethren, understand this case: you know the truth of all that we have said, and how much more might be said with equal truth. Can you be indifferent in this matter? Will you not bring it distinctly before your people? Have you so little influence in your flocks that you cannot induce even the *communicants of the church*, to become responsible for *twenty-five cents each for five years*? Will you not put into their hands a *subscription paper* to this effect, and see that the amount is collected? This single measure, carried throughout the churches, would put an end at once to all pecuniary difficulties. This Seminary would lift its head—the hearts of its conductors would revive, their hands would be strong, and every interest which depends on its continuance would be at once secured. And are there no considerations of sufficient force to induce the pledged and sworn servants of Jesus Christ to do as much as this for his gospel’s sake? Have you reminded them of what themselves owe to that gospel? Have you pressed upon them the command of our master, to ‘commit his truth to faithful men who shall be able to teach it,’ a command we cannot fulfil unless they put the means within our power? Have you set before their eyes the hour of death and the solem-

nity of judgment, and asked them how they can answer it to Jesus Christ, to let his truth perish in their hands and die before their eyes? If you have not done this, you have not yet fulfilled your duty to God and to the Church—and if you will do it, the Assembly can never be brought to believe that you will plead in vain. They will not, they cannot believe, that while the hands that were pierced are stretched out with a request for such an offering, a christian can be found in all our bounds who will refuse his Lord.” [*Relig. Remem.*]

Much talent and ingenuity are displayed in this address : we could wish they had been exerted in a better cause. But the concluding paragraph we consider the most exceptionable part. That they should presume to represent Jesus Christ holding out his pierced hands with a request for an offering to their Seminary, and intimate that for a christian to decline giving would be refusing his Lord, seems hardly credible, and can be but little short of blasphemy. This remark may be considered by some as too severe, but such a presumption merits the most pointed rebuke ; and those to whom it applies are sufficiently numerous and learned, if we do them any injustice, to answer for themselves. Had they represented John Calvin, or Ashbel Green, or some other leading characters of their society, stretching out their hands to obtain “such an offering,” it might be consistent enough. But to set forth Jesus Christ, who never gave any sanction to such institutions, and who chose men unlearned and unlettered to preach his gospel, as interesting himself so much in behalf of their seminary for educating ministers to go forth to receive from 2 to 3 and 4,000 dollars annually, as to stretch out his hands with a request for people to make an offering to it, is wholly unwarrantable. It is a gross prostitution of the sacred character of the Son of God, and cannot be justified by any principles of reason or scripture example ; and serves to show how men will lose all sense of propriety, and go to any lengths to carry on a favourite scheme of their own, which promises an extension of their influence, and the advancement of their cause.

We might here remark on other parts of this address, and show the consequences which arise to christianity, by the too often proud and worldly minded ministers which issue from these Seminaries, in inculcating a popular and fashionable religion—but we pass it over, and refer our readers to what has already appeared under the article “*Theological Seminaries*,” in 2d and 3d numbers of this work.

For The Reformer.

Messrs. Editors.—Having accidentally seen the Address of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, *to the Churches and Congregations under their care*, begging more money for their Theological Seminary at Princeton, a few thoughts struck my mind on the latter clause of that very ingenious and eloquent address, which I shall take the liberty to suggest for *The Reformer*. The powers of eloquence and ingenuity are, indeed, exhausted in endeavouring to obtain more money from the people, who have already given them thousands upon thousands, and tens of thousands of dollars, for the support of their “much-loved Seminary,” the “child of their hopes and of their prayers”—and all this in addition to what they have periodically to contribute in support of their own individual churches and ministers, as well as Missionary Associations, Bible Societies, &c. &c. Were it not for the greediness of these ecclesiastical beggars, who the more they obtain the more insatiable they become, I would have taken no notice of them or their address; the whole of which is very barefaced, though not so reprehensible as the last clause; which represents the blessed Redeemer stretching out his hands with a request for an offering to their Seminary. Methinks were we to witness this gross insult offered to the Saviour of the world, and hold our peace, the very stones would cry out.

I will contend, that their favourite Seminary is not only useless with regard to promoting the true interests of Christ's kingdom, but is only calculated to produce just such men as the Jewish scribes and lawyers (who took away the key of knowledge, neither entering in themselves and hindering others) and impose them on mankind as true ministers of the gospel. For such Seminaries and educating youth in such a manner for the ministry, are as opposite to the whole genius of the gospel, as well as the plainest precepts and example of Christ and his Apostles, as light is to darkness. We

are even commanded by the lip of truth, sedulously to avoid the proud wisdom, vain knowledge and scholastic learning of this delusive world, as the most deleterious evil; because nothing has a more sure and direct tendency to keep the soul of man from coming with child-like humility and christian simplicity to the feet of Jesus, to be taught the doctrines of the cross, to experience the death of self, the birth of the spirit, and above all, to learn the essence of divine wisdom, viz. to become a fool for Christ's sake. I am bold to affirm, that all the combined powers of darkness could not invent a more perfect system to manufacture enemies to the cross of Christ, than the present mode of making ministers in such Seminaries as the one at Princeton, where young men are taught all the pride of polite literature and profound erudition, in order to make a fortune, or at least obtain an establishment of from 500 to 4000 dollars per annum, by professing the humility, and pretending to preach the self-denying doctrines of him who had not where to lay his head. Such glaring hypocrisy is enough to make two-thirds of our population deists, and bring the judgments of God upon our land.

I would now ask, can any thing be more presumptuous, or even more blasphemous, than for these men to make Jesus Christ himself come begging more money for their seminary with his pierced hands, and from the very people who, I am sorry to find, have already given far too generously and far too much. Did the blessed Jesus in the days of his humanity, ever by precept or example, sanction any such institutions, or discover any thing of this greediness to get money from the people? Did he not rather at one time, when he required some tribute money, work a miracle sooner than ask it of any one? And did not his Apostle Paul work at his trade for his own support, sooner than take the people's money, although they would have given almost their very eyes to him, without his begging, they loved him so well. If people want to promote the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world, and win souls to God, let them imitate the example of Christ and his Apostles, and seek to have the mind that was in them. Then, and not till

then, will stumbling blocks be removed out of the way, and righteousness be diffused and flourish in the earth.

PLAIN TRUTH.

For The Reformer.

Extracts from "A Sermon, preached Aug. 19, 1817, before the Middlebury College Charitable Society, for educating indigent youth for the Gospel Ministry."

"The Son of God exercises his prerogative in sending forth labourers: we by furnishing them with a competent portion of the learning of this world."

"The opinion entertained by some, that human literature is unnecessary for those who labour in the gospel, is founded in error; and in its tendency is fatal to the honour and interests of christianity."

That human literature (by which is to be understood that kind of literature deemed essential to a liberal education) is a necessary qualification in a gospel minister, we do unhesitatingly deny. Nay, we will go further, and declare it as our firm belief, that it is seldom ever useful. Many eminent and powerful ministers we know, who were never instructed in a college; and many we believe may be found, who having acquired a stock of human learning, sufficient perhaps to qualify them for the gospel ministry, in the view of this advocate, have, on being called to that office, found that learning to be of little avail. Such, indeed, appears to be the case with some whom our author instances in his sermon, as having "reached the loftiest eminence in the christian church." Of these, he says—"What simplicity distinguishes both their preaching and their writings! In them there are no abstract unintelligible speculations, no nice metaphysical disquisitions."—"With all their literary accomplishments, the essays of these champions for divine truth, were little else than an application of scripture to the conscience and the heart."

But we are told that "The Son of God exercises *his* prerogative in sending forth labourers—we by furnish-

ing them with a competent portion of the learning of this world."

If the sending forth of labourers be indeed Christ's prerogative (as we believe it exclusively to be) how comes it that in those societies who contend for the *necessity* of human learning, none should be permitted to go forth upon their master's errand, but such as *they* have previously educated for the purpose? And further, that of those whom they have *thus* qualified, few, unless they betray some obvious moral disqualification, should be rejected? Have they then a *veto* on our Saviour's prerogative? Is he to exercise it only within certain limits which they shall prescribe? They undertake to judge what is that portion and kind of human learning, which shall constitute a competency for a gospel minister. Suppose an illiterate man to present himself for the office, declaring that he believed himself called to it, would they not reject him merely on the score of illiterateness? Admitting for a moment that they have the *prior* prerogative of making a nomination, out of which (and *no other*) the election *must* be made, from what scripture do they determine the quantum of learning necessary to constitute a competency in the estimation of him whose prerogative it is "to send forth labourers?" Can they make it appear that Christ taught his disciples natural history, civil or ecclesiastical history; that he exercised them in elocution, or any other branch of human learning? If the Apostles were *thus* taught, it behoves the learned preacher to show us whence he derives his knowledge of the fact. The Apostles were indeed learned, but it was emphatically "in the school of Christ," (not in that of the scribe or pharisee) and in that school must every minister of the gospel be taught. "Learn of me," said Christ, "for I am meek and lowly of heart." And again, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." This is the learning which is indeed *essential* to a gospel minister, and without which all human learning will never authorize or qualify a man to preach; nay, it is much to be feared, that human learning has often been a stumbling

block to its possessor, and has prevented him from coming into that state in which alone the Lord will condescend to teach us of his ways.

DANIEL.

(*To be concluded in our next.*)

For The Reformer.

To the Editors.—As I sat musing, the subject of depraved christendom came before me. I was struck with silent astonishment at what I am daily a witness to in the common walks of life; and after receiving and reading the 6th number of your Reformer, I felt my mind expanded to offer a few remarks. Truth and faithful words are very forcible. They make their way to the heart, and bring iniquity to light; and by them the foundations of wickedness are overthrown. When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, it caused Felix to tremble; and methinks that some of the false expositors of the holy records of truth, and merchants of the gospel, begin to tremble for fear the mysteries of their proceedings will be made known, the mask of hypocrisy be torn from their faces, and so their craft come to an end.

That man must be ignorant indeed, who cannot perceive with a single glance, that the spirit and simplicity of the gospel do not exist among the popular preachers of this day and their deluded followers, whose language is, "we are many." A *legion* indeed they are, and they are not confined to the mountains and tombs; but our cities, villages and cantons are overspread with them, as the fields of Palestine were overspread with the palmerworm and caterpillar, in the time of the prophet Joel; and like them they destroy the green herbage, and take the hard earned labours of the honest industrious man. "ONE OF MANY," it seems from your 5th number, has crawled out from the *legion* and appeared in public, in order to vindicate the reverence due to the fraternity; but alas! his pitcher and lamp were both empty, and he had not the sword of the Lord and of Gideon to wield in his cause; therefore his exasperated mind has only dis-

played the same spirit which caused Servetus to be burned at the stake in Geneva.

The Lord, I believe, has a few true and faithful witnesses whom he has inspired with his holy spirit, and they will trust in his name and seek to maintain his truth; but alas! they are too few, as always hath been the case. We read when Elijah was the only prophet of the Lord in Israel, there were 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves.

It is almost too humiliating to be spoken, but so it is, and ought not to be concealed, that in taking a view of degenerate christendom, there appears little else but errors and ignorance, calamities and crimes, almost all being either wicked or wretched: and it is a painful task to a man of feeling and sensibility to survey it; but it is the duty of every true christian to contribute all in his power to rescue it from thence to a better state, and prevent as many as possible from falling a prey to the general contagion. Impartial inquirers after truth, who are neutral with regard to pecuniary advantages, are very few in number. Clerical characters in particular, who are the leaders of the people, are liable to be suspected of acting more from interest than principle, and contending for victory rather than for truth; and this is apt to be the case with any art or office, business or profession, of which one makes a gain. Hence so much knavery in so many offices and professions among the haughty sons of mammon, who weigh opinions by the standard of gold, and sentiments by the weight of the purse; and are offended if any one presumes to witness against their conduct or expose their practices.

This partiality and thirst for the mammon of unrighteousness, bring much odium upon the professors of religion, and cause carnal minded men and skepticks to triumph in the streets of Jerusalem, and mock at her dissimulation, hypocrisy and delusion. The Indian chief very justly observed to one of the missionaries, "It is not Jehovah, but Gold that is the christian's god; they cannot worship in their temples without passing about the money changers, and collecting the coin, even on their holy Sabbath day. Mammon, instead of Christ,

is their master. Go and cleanse your own temples of these pollutions, and get your mission from on high, and return to us, and we will hear you." These just remarks ought to be engraven on Italian marble, and placed in every temple in christendom.

I admire the integrity of a correspondent to The Reformer, under the signature of "A Methodist"; and if all who are favoured to see the tyrannical, intolerant mysteries of their sects, dared be as independent to exhibit them to the world, the veil of deception and hypocrisy would be removed, and their infallibility would cease to be so much adored by their deluded adherents; and truth might find its way to their hearts, and reign triumphant over superstition, tradition, and priestly idolatry. Indeed, it is my belief, that all the various sects included in the great city Babylon (which is built on bogs and quicksands) will ere long tremble to their base, and that those who have aided in building up her walls with untempered mortar, and forming ramparts of superstition round about her, will see their works brought to naught; and should her superstructure fall, great will be the fall thereof: and many will say, alas! that great city—while a cry will be raised with acclamations of joy by saints and prophets who have been oppressed and persecuted within her borders, Babylon is fallen—is fallen.

AN ADULLAMITE.

We insert the following account, to show one of the principal causes, why there are so many infidels on the continent of Europe and in England, viz. corrupt christianity and degenerate ministers. It is extracted from a letter written by Frederick Smith, a minister of the Society of Friends, in London, to John Murray, of New York, and was first published in the CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

"I became acquainted with a native of Ireland, F——N——, who, in his early youth, went to Germany, where he was educated in one of their colleges; and was brought up in the Roman Catholic persuasion; the inconsistency of which, he told me, he very early saw. The

bigotry, superstition and wickedness of the priests, were such as to give him a disgust to religion; believing, he said, that the foundation of it was dissimulation and priestcraft.

“ When he left the university he was introduced to the emperor Joseph the second, to whom he was one of the lords of the bed-chamber; and he became an officer of rank in the German army; a part of which he commanded in a war against the Turks. The emperor made him a count, in addition to his hereditary titles of marquis and viscount of Valadesto, in Spain; he was also a grandee of the first order in that kingdom; besides which he was related to some of the first nobility in England and Ireland.

“ At the commencement of our acquaintance, he expressed a wish to know something of the principles of Friends; and having read Barclay's Apology, on returning it, he told me it was the best written book on divinity he had ever seen; and if it were possible to act according to the sentiments contained in it, no man could act wrong; but he added, ‘ I have something to say to you in private, and which I hardly dare to say to any other man. Unfortunately for me, I do not believe in any system of religion: I do not even believe in the existence of a God. You may be assured it is a subject that has given me a great deal of thought, and when I came into this protestant country, I had hoped I should have discovered the essence of truth; and that the protestant clergy would have given the lie to the impressions I had imbibed, from my early prejudices on account of the dissolute and abandoned lives of the Romish clergy. But alas! I perceive there is the same system of deception carried on in England as in Germany: the clergy have only one thing in view; and that is the accumulation of wealth, and where it can be done, to endeavour after splendour and aggrandizement. As to their flocks, it is a matter of no consequence to them, whether they are wise or ignorant, it appears no part of their study to aim at their religious improvement; so that I find myself just where I was. I find that all mankind are alike; they pretend to religion and that is all; they talk of it and there they leave it. As a confirmation of what I say, I

may inform you, that on my first coming into these parts, I paid a visit to my relations in Ireland, who showed me great hospitality and kindness, and as is usual in that country, there were large convivial parties, where neither the manners, nor the conversation would bear much reflection even in an infidel, as I supposed I should be called.

‘It happened one evening, that the conversation took a religious turn, in the course of which I inadvertently leaned towards skepticism at least; on which one of the company hastily said, ‘Surely, sir, you do not doubt the existence of a Supreme Being?’ to which I replied, ‘What are your sentiments on that subject?’ ‘Why, sir, my sentiments are these; I look upon the Almighty as of infinite purity: as the object of both love and fear; that I am in his immediate presence; that it is through him I live and move, and have my being; I consider that I am amenable to him for every action of my life; that if I do evil voluntarily, I run the hazard of his eternal displeasure, and wretchedness will be my portion; but if I act according to his will I shall be eternally happy.’ ‘Is this, sir, really and truly your belief?’ ‘Yes, it undoubtedly is, and is also the belief of every well regulated Christian.’

‘Then, sir, how comes it to pass, that your actions correspond so little with your profession? Is it possible that such a hear-say evidence as this, would convince me, were I an atheist, of the truth of God’s existence? Has any part of your conduct, since we have been so often together, manifested either love or fear, or reverence for this object of your pretended regard? I wish not to give you offence, but see, whether there is any thing like consistency in your declarations, and in the conduct I am led to fear you are in the habitual practice of? My friend seemed confused and thoughtful, and I immediately turned the discourse to another subject.’

“I was much struck with so much of his conversation, and was considerably more so, when he told me in confidence, that he had left Germany on account of his objections to serving any longer in the army; that the thoughts of taking away the life of a fellow man, had become distressing and perplexing to him; so much so that he could

in no way become accessory to the death of a fellow creature."

It is not a little remarkable, that this professed infidel should possess such conscientious feelings, against "taking away the life of a fellow man," while so many professed christians, have no scruples on this subject, and both engage in destroying the lives of their own species, and justify the practice. Alas! can such profesors have the spirit of Christ dwelling within them?

The letter from which this extract is made, afterwards states, that this man soon after became convinced of the truth of christianity, by the instrumentality of a female minister, of the society of Friends, and was endeavouring to live according to its requirements.

From a late account, the population of Europe is estimated at 180,000,000. Of these the number of Roman Catholics are 100,000,000; Protestants of different communities, 42,000,000; Greek Church, 32,000,000; Menonists, 240,000; Methodists, 180,000; Unitarians, 50,000; Quakers, 40,000; Mahometans, 2,630,000; Jews, 2,060,000; Hernhutters, 40,000.

One of the Missionaries in the East Indies, giving an account of the affairs of the church, states: "In consequence of the removal of his majesty's 84th regt. our members have been almost all taken away from us, and scattered far abroad on the face of the wide earth."

These professed christians, it must be recollected, had been engaged in fighting and killing the natives. How can the missionaries expect to win the inhabitants of India to the gospel, when such a large portion of the members of their congregations in those parts are men of blood, and are actually employed in destroying their lives? The catholic missionaries were not quite so blind as this, and assumed a more specious form of goodness and humanity. We believe it would be far better for all such missionaries as are disposed to sanction such violations of the precepts of Christ to stay at home; and that the people who employ them might appropriate their money to a much better purpose, than to send them to convert the heathen. The cause of Christ must suffer, instead of being promoted, by such characters.

* * The communication entitled "Errors of the Times," being of considerable length, and not well admitting of a division, we have not yet been able to insert, but shall endeavour to attend to it in our next.

* * "Sophronia" has been received, and shall appear.

☞ A piece printed at Poughkeepsie, called the "Examiner", is just received. It contains strictures on "Vindicator"—but came too late for this number.

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